



MANUFACTURERS AND  
EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION

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1 September 2007

Secretariat  
Justice and Electoral Committee  
Parliament House  
Wellington

Dear Madam

**Submission from the New Zealand Manufacturers and Exporters Association on the Electoral Finance Bill.**

The New Zealand Manufacturers and Exporters Association is pleased to have this opportunity to provide feedback on this submission.

***Background***

The New Zealand Manufacturers and Exporters Association (MEA) represents the interests of manufacturers and exporters throughout New Zealand.

The MEA is New Zealand's only authoritative, independent voice for manufacturers and exporters. MEA members make nearly \$2.0 billion in sales and have an export value of around \$1.0 billion. Our organisation can trace its beginning to the early history of New Zealand. As a legacy of the hard work and careful financial management of the past, we have a significant asset base that enables our independence and extends our activity. Subscriptions fund only a small part of our current operating costs.

The MEA is independent, we do not seek or receive funding from local or central government, nor are we associated to any government linked business groups or chambers of commerce.

The health of the elaborately transformed manufacture, particularly, and exporters generally, act like the "canary in the coalmine" indicating the long-term prospects for our whole economy.

***Submission***

**We have considered the Electoral Finance Bill and would oppose it on the basis that the definition of electoral advertising, as stated under Part 1, Clause 5, is far too broad and would place unacceptable limitations on free speech. In so doing, it would severely impact our ability to conduct our core mission and we would be faced with no option but to consider ignoring any such legislation.**

For the record, we see our core mission as agreeing, articulating and representing the views and interests of our members, and in our view, the long-term interests of all New Zealanders.

In order to legitimately represent the views of our members, we must interact with them to develop an understanding of their views and communicate them to the public and public representatives.

This mission often requires us to publicly comment on Government policy, and we maintain contact and dialogue with representatives from all political parties. We cannot do otherwise and pursue our mission adequately – we must be heard by the public and public representatives.

Our concern is the manner in which the definition of ‘election advertising’, as drafted in the bill, might be interpreted. Our view may be dismissed as alarmist but oak trees grow from acorns, and we see our mission threatened by the sensitivities of politicians – learn to deal with legitimate criticism, please do not try to regulate opinion.

You might not agree with what we say, or how we say it, but restriction must surely be the greater of the two evils and should have no place in New Zealand legislation.

The MEA does wish to be heard on this submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Walley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

**John Walley**  
**Chief Executive**